

VZCZCXRO6529

PP RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHKA #0725/01 2071236

ZNY SSSSS ZZH

P 261236Z JUL 09

FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9206

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000725

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2019

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: (S) NSI DIRECTOR GENERAL PLEDGES CONTINUED
COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (S) In a July 19 meeting with Ambassador, Brigadier General Monzur Ahmed (Retd), Director General of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) Organization stressed that the Prime Minister viewed counterterrorism as a top priority for the nation. Monzur described NSI's role in combating terrorism and noted some of the impediments he faced in intelligence coordination and lack of resources.

All in Agreement on Terrorism

¶2. (S) On July 19, Ambassador Moriarty hosted Monzur Ahmed, DG NSI at the Ambassador's residence. RAO Chief and Brigadier General M. H. Salahuddin (Retd) NSI Director for External Affairs, also attended. The DG wholeheartedly agreed with the Ambassador's 3 "D" explanation of U.S. policy toward Bangladesh: democratization, development, and denial of space to terrorists. Monzur stated the NSI played an important role when it came to the denial of space to terrorist organizations. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina viewed counterterrorism initiatives as a top priority for her administration. She had instructed Monzur to focus his officers at NSI on threats to Bangladesh's national security.

Review of NSI Priorities

¶3. (S) Monzur identified four priority threats that he had charged his organization with monitoring. First, there was concern over the growing number of Leftist groups charged with spreading anti-government and Maoist ideologies across the country. Second, the Rohingya Muslim militant groups and solidarity organizations were a priority due to their size, anti-government sentiments and refusal to integrate into mainstream Bangladeshi society. The third focus area was trafficking with specific mention of human, narcotics and weapons traffickers. Finally, the fourth threat was terrorism, both domestic and transnational in nature. Monzur acknowledged that there were both home-grown and transnational terrorist networks operating inside Bangladesh.

He noted that some of their objectives appeared to be: destabilizing the Government of Bangladesh, assassinating the Prime Minister, attacking democratic ideals and principles, conducting attacks on Western targets, and conducting attacks on neighboring countries (i.e., India). Monzur emphasized his plans to focus additional efforts on countering terrorism.

Progress and Problems with Intelligence Sharing

¶4. (S) Monzur said he was encouraged by weekly counterterrorism coordination meetings now being conducted among senior members of NSI, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and the Special Branch (SB) of the National Police Force. He acknowledged, however, that coordination at the working level was still lacking. Monzur assessed that coordination would improve as a result of computer upgrades underway that would facilitate the passing and sharing of information. Digital connectivity at the airports was an area Monzur was exploring to enable all services to simultaneously track and monitor travel by persons of interest. Training for airport and hotel officials was a high priority for Monzur since these facilities were likely targets for terrorist attacks and the personnel had no training with respect to how to identify or respond to a terrorist attack. On a positive note, he reported that the government had recently begun conducting background investigations on airport and hotel hires to prevent anyone with nefarious ties from gaining employment.

Challenges within NSI

¶5. (S) When asked about challenges facing NSI, Monzur raised personnel issues, commenting that there was no system in place to remove an overhang of unproductive employees. In addition, NSI was experiencing difficulties implementing new regulations for gender hiring quotas. Another challenge was the public image of NSI officers, who generally were not well-liked and seen as ineffective in Bangladeshi society. The DG focused on the NSI's lack of resources and training. Monzur explained that NSI had an office in every district

DHAKA 00000725 002 OF 002

throughout the country. However, most of these district offices did not have the infrastructure, equipment or vehicles required to properly do their jobs. He highlighted that the border regions, both land and sea, were particularly difficult to monitor and report on. NSI relied heavily on the assistance of foreign government services to augment their training and infrastructure needs. He discussed future plans and various training programs NSI would receive from several foreign government services.

Comment

¶6. (S) The cordial meeting reflected the close U.S.-Bangladesh cooperation and joint focus on security and counterterrorism issues. The DG's strong assurances that NSI will continue to focus on identifying and disrupting terrorist networks underscore this close ongoing collaboration. We can expect NSI's forward-leaning cooperation to continue. In addition, we are seeing the results, with the Bangladesh authorities arresting more suspected terrorists.

MORIARTY